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Agony of Ecstasy: NCIS Targets Dangerous Drug

By Larry Jackson, Naval Criminal Investigative Service Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — It is called ecstasy, a dangerous drug that also goes by the nicknames “e,” “x,” “m,” “adam,” “kleenex,” the “love drug,” the “hug drug,” “bean,” “clarity,” “essence” and “XTC.” Whatever the name, ecstasy is probably the most alarming drug problem for the Navy and Marine Corps since the 1970s.

Once popular only in the fringe elements of American culture, civilian ecstasy use has been on the rise for years. For example, the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA) reported that ecstasy use increased in 1999 among 10th and 12th graders.

An annual study, “Monitoring the Future,” conducted by the University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research, reported that ecstasy use

among 12th-grade students more than doubled from 3.6 percent to 8.2 percent between 1998 and 2000.

While trends for other illicit drugs are stabilizing or declining, ecstasy use appears to be spreading. Reflecting this trend in American society, the Navy and Marine Corps have experienced a significant increase in the detected use of the drug among Sailors and Marines.

Since 1998, the Department of the Navy (DoN) has experienced an increase in ecstasy abuse of more than 1,000 percent. In 1998, 51 Sailors and Marines tested positive for the drug. While that translates to a relatively low number of detected users — it is estimated that more than 500 Sailors and Marines will test positive in 2001 — the trend is very alarming for a variety of reasons.

First, is the misperception that

ecstasy is hard to detect. The Department of Defense (DoD) drug laboratories have been testing for ecstasy since mid-1997 and have worked closely with the commercial sector to develop more sensitive screening assays, which have been approved for use by the Food and Drug Administration. The Navy laboratories are also installing new high-speed analyzers that will further improve the ability to detect ecstasy use.

Second, drug use trends for other illegal narcotics have been declining in the Navy and Marine Corps.

Third, the widespread perception among the public is that ecstasy is not dangerous, and there are people who believe it is legal.

“The only thing spreading faster than the drug itself is misinformation about the drug,” said Donnie Marshall of the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) counter-narcotics agents and analysts began noting a rise in these so-called club drug-related cases — particularly ecstasy — on the West Coast several years ago. The trend steadily spread eastward, moving out of the big cities and into the smaller cities and towns across the nation.

In 1999, NCIS counter-narcotics agents and analysts shifted into high gear, studying the club drugs and cultural factors leading to their increased use. Armed with this general information, agents in the field studied the problem from a local standpoint, and then developed operations to counter the distribution networks springing up on and around naval bases and installations.

“Supply reduction through law enforcement is only one part of a

EOD Prep



Senior Chief Machinist's Mate James Walker leads "Perspective Students in Training" (PSI) in a round of flutter kicks on Gator Beach, Coronado, Calif. The PSI program enhances the physical and mental readiness of personnel in preparation for Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) training. Photo by Michael D. Kennedy

See **NCIS**, page 4

Sailors Can Review Service Records Online

By the Center for Career Development Public Affairs

MILLINGTON, Tenn. (NNS) — Sailors can now update their performance summary records (PSR) and officer data cards (ODC) online at Navy Personnel Command's Center for Career Development Web site at

www.staynavy.navy.mil.

This new feature provides service members instant access to their records via the Internet, and enables them to request changes or updates online.

"This feature accelerates the records verification process exponentially," said Lt. Murry Carter, deputy director, records support branch (Pers-312).

Carter added that the

feature greatly reduces the need for hard-copy mail-outs of the service record, thereby saving the Navy hundreds of thousands of dollars in postage. "We estimate that the Navy could save nearly \$450,000 in the next fiscal year by moving away from traditional direct mailing of ODCs, and PSRs."

The new online features will also eliminate hundreds of telephone calls, e-mails and questions from the fleet about contents of the record.

"We're reaching out to people with our services better and faster than ever before," said Carter. "This state-of-the-art technology is definitely a

win-win for our Sailors and for our record support personnel."

Carter said that record support personnel will now spend the time previously devoted to printing and mailing out the records monitoring the online records review link on the "Stay Navy" Web page and collecting changes submitted electronically by service members.

"Instead of automatic annual mailing of ODCs or receiving requests for the hard-copy PSR records, we're getting ODC e-mail record changes via the Web," said Carter.

He noted the positive change taking place in his

department and credits the new online feature.

"We are very pleased with the fact that the new online records review feature allows us to provide impeccable levels of customer satisfaction, in addition to customer service," Carter added. "The road ahead for us is to continue providing fast, effective service to the fleet, and to remain an integral part of every Sailor's career management focus."

For more information, go to **www.staynavy.navy.mil** or contact the Pers-312 team at (901) 874-3351.

USS Constellation CVBG Sailors "Stay Navy"

By Aviation Storekeeper 3rd Class (AW) Joseph Rey Quiroz, USS Constellation Public Affairs

USS CONSTELLATION, At Sea (NNS) — Two hundred fifty Sailors in the USS Constellation (CVN 64) Carrier Battle Group (CVBG) decided to "stay Navy" in a big way.

As the CVBG sailed home from a six-month deployment in the Western Pacific Ocean, 182 Constellation Sailors and 68 Sailors of Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 2 reenlisted during daylong reenlistment ceremonies aboard the ship.

The reenlistees were taking advantage of a program that directed the temporary modification to the selective reenlistment bonus (SRB) program for Fiscal Year 2001.

Sailors operating in a combat zone or a qualified hazardous-duty area in the month of August qualified for this one-time program that also allows FY02 reenlistees to sign up early and still receive a tax-free SRB.

"To be able to reenlist for a tax-free SRB prior to 31 August was a great deal targeted specifically at the Constellation Battle Group," said Rear Adm. Terrance Etnyre, commander of the CVBG. "This SRB opportunity is a great example of what the CNO refers to as 'covenant

leadership': a Sailor's pledge to Navy mission accomplishment and the Navy's return commitment."

"I commend the reenlistees," said Command Master Chief (CMDMC)(AW/SW) Peter Flores of Calexico, Calif., CVW 2's command master chief. "But we have to give thanks to the career counselors who put in the late hours and got these guys the orders they wanted, so all this could be possible."

"I planned on staying in the Navy for another tour," said Aviation Machinist's Mate 2nd Class Michael Dubics of Seward, Penn., assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (HSL) 2. "I don't know of a better job. I'm headed for shore duty, and I will have the opportunity to go to school. The Navy's taught me a trade. I work with hydraulics and airframes on helicopters, and I love tearing them apart and putting them back together. Knowing that the pilots have faith in me puts an extra sense of responsibility on everything I do."

"Finding out about the SRB just made me want to stay in that much more," said Aviation Electronics Technician 1st Class (AW) Richard Osborn of North Judson,

Ind., assigned to Electronic Attack Squadron (VAQ) 131 out of Whidbey Island, Wash. "I knew I was going to reenlist. There is no other place out there that gives you anything close to what you have while you're in the Navy: Security for you and your family. Knowing that they are taken care of no matter what makes me feel good."

"I'm being groomed to become a chief. I'm encouraged to step ahead, to get the experience and acquire the skills that I'll need," said Osborn. "I remind fellow Sailors of what's available to us."

"The constant in our business is sustained superior performance, and those who maintain it will have many doors opened to them and can achieve any goal," said CMDMC(AW/SW) James Abeyta of Cleveland, N.M. "This rare SRB opportunity from the CNO is a true blessing. It demonstrates that the Navy gives back to those who dedicate themselves to this great organization and this country."

For more information on USS Constellation, go to **www.navy.mil/homepages/cv64/**.

Task Force EXCEL Announces Pilot Projects

By Lt. Cmdr. Gary Kirchner, Task Force EXCEL Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — The Task Force for Excellence through Commitment to Education and Learning (EXCEL) is launching several pilot programs to further improve fleet performance and Sailor growth and development.

The projects are broad in scope and include revising the leadership training course, integrating distance learning into schoolhouse programs, developing personal and portable Web sites, and expanding e-learning opportunities for both professional and personal needs.

"We also intend to take some dramatic steps to improve scheduling, instructor loading, cost and ITEMPO (individual personnel tempo) efficiencies in our fleet concentration areas,"

said Vice Adm. Al Harms Jr., chief of naval education and training.

Task Force EXCEL will use these pilot programs to test new educational concepts and procedures that will be replicated throughout the Navy. Working on two levels simultaneously, Task Force EXCEL's implementation teams will solve short-term training needs while establishing improved long-term training processes.

"Our goal is to make Navy training performance-based," said Dr. Jan Cannon-Bowers, director of Task Force EXCEL's Human Performance Cell. "This means that we are going to take the time to determine exactly what knowledge, skills and abilities are required to be successful on the job. This information will then be

combined with what we know about human learning and performance to develop training that is optimized for the job and tailored to the needs of individual Sailors."

Ultimately, Task Force EXCEL will construct blended training opportunities that involve a combination of on-the-job training, classroom, e-learning and mentoring educational experiences. The idea is to create a training system that accommodates different ability levels and different learning styles.

"All of these improvements will help us provide better service to the fleet, achieve a learning culture in our Navy where Sailor time, Sailor development and Sailor performance are central to

our every action, and help make our Navy a widely recognized 'employer of choice,'" said Harms.

Task Force EXCEL is Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Vern Clark's top action item for the next 12 months. The goal of the initiative is to revolutionize and revitalize Navy training to provide Sailors the opportunity to succeed and prosper in their professional and personal lives.

This revolution will challenge old assumptions, implement new processes, and create new tools that will make a real difference in the lives of Sailors and the Navy's war fighting capabilities.

For more information on Navy training, go to www.cnet.navy.mil/.

Iwo Jima Sailor: Trend-Setting "Surface Warrior"

By Journalist 2nd Class Brian McNeal, USS Iwo Jima Public Affairs

NORFOLK, Va. (NNS) — Little did Machinist's Mate 1st Class (SW) Ernest Collins realize that he would become a trailblazer aboard USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7) when he became the first crewmember to earn the enlisted surface warfare specialist (ESWS) qualification.

Collins, a native of Winona, Miss., began working toward his pin in May, less than a month after he and 900 other Sailors moved aboard the ship in preparation for its commissioning the following month.

He had opportunities to earn the pin on four previous ships, but he focused more on the work center than the ESWS qualification. It



USS *Iwo Jima* (LHD 7)

U.S. Navy photo

wasn't until this year's chief petty officer (CPO) results came out that the consequences of a blank designator block on his evaluation really hit home.

"I know not having my pin was why I didn't make it," said Collins, referring to

certification.

"Operationally, this crew is ready to tackle anything," said Capt. John T. Nawrocki, *Iwo Jima's* commanding officer. "Now is the time for some personal training. MM1 Collins' recent effort and reward should serve as a catalyst for us all."

Collins' accomplishment has had a profound effect on the crew. Off-duty hours previously spent winding down from inspection preparation are being used by hundreds to get signatures in their ESWS or enlisted aviation warfare qualifications.

"It will help me for advancement," said Damage Controlman 3rd Class Joseph

the CPO examination. "I had everything else. I'm pretty confident I'll make it next time."

The ship's crewmembers spent the last six months getting their ship ready for major evolutions like light off assessment and crew

See *Iwo Jima*, page 5

Get That Tax Refund Faster With ELF/VITA

By Carolyn Alison, Office of the Judge Advocate General Public Affairs

WASHINGTON (NNS) — With the latest news about tax cuts and rebates, the issue of taxes is on everyone's mind.

Sailors and Marines seeking information about the new tax laws should stop by the local area Electronic Filing/Volunteer Income Tax Center (ELF/VITA) when tax season 2002 rolls around.

The ELF/VITA program has just finished its seventh successful year as a quality-of-life program. Hundreds of active-duty personnel, Reservists, retirees and civilians volunteered their time at the ELF/VITA sites, saving Sailors and Marines more than \$11 million in fees they would have been charged by commercial tax preparers to perform the same services.

One of the best reasons for taking taxes

to the ELF/VITA site is because the service is free. The ELF/VITA staff will fill out and electronically file most taxes for active-duty personnel, dependants and retirees at no cost. In addition, Sailors and Marines can receive their refunds in approximately nine days if they file electronically, instead of the 45-day wait.

This past year there were 142 ELF/VITA sites worldwide both ashore and at sea. Those sites prepared a total of 178,104 returns — 123,773 federal returns and 54,331 state returns. More than 109,000 federal returns were filed electronically.

Although this program is primarily geared toward the junior Sailor or Marine, active-duty members of all ranks

are taking advantage of this program.

Clients assisted by ELF/VITA program this year were 86 percent enlisted, 4 percent officers, and 10 percent retirees and active-duty family members.

Most ELF/VITA sites will be opening their doors for business around the second or third week of January and will remain open until April 15, 2002. The sites are located at the Naval Legal Service Offices (NLSO), base fleet and family service centers, and on board most aircraft carriers.

To locate an ELF/VITA site, contact the local NLSO or the command legal officer. For information on filing taxes electronically, go to www.irs.gov/ind_info/index.html.

NCIS, con't. from pg. 1

strategy to reduce illegal drug use," said NCIS Special Agent Ernie Simon. "Demand reduction through prevention and education is crucial."

Another aspect of demand reduction is deterrence and detection through frequent unannounced random drug testing. In response, DoN is increasing the number of drug screenings for 2001.

With NCIS well ahead of most other law-enforcement agencies in addressing ecstasy abuse, analysts and agents had to educate a lot of people, starting with senior Navy and Marine Corps leaders. As awareness at senior levels increased, it became clear that there was also a need to counter the widespread misinformation about ecstasy.

In cooperation with commander in chief, U.S. Atlantic Fleet, Fleet Combat Camera Atlantic and NIDA, NCIS produced an awareness video that was mailed to the field earlier this year.

Within a month of the video's distribution, outside organizations, from local law enforcement to the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy, requested copies of the video.

Ecstasy, technically known as 3-4 methylene-dioxymethamphetamine, or MDMA, has been around for nearly 90 years, since its creation in Germany.

In liquid form, the drug is clear; in pill form it looks like an aspirin. The drug can also be in powder or gelatin form, but most of the time it is sold as a pill, said NCIS Special Agent Matt Butler.

According to the NIDA, physical side effects include muscle tension, involuntary teeth clenching, nausea, blurred vision, rapid eye-movement, fainting and chills or sweating. In the most severe cases, users have suffered from heat stroke, and then died from cardiac arrest. Users must drink large quantities of water to keep from dehydrating.

Ecstasy is commonly used at raves, where the hallucinogen enhances the effects of loud techno music and flashing lights and makes the ecstasy abusers, or "ravers," feel closer together. Users report that it causes mood changes and loosens their inhibitions. They become more outgoing, empathetic and affectionate. Ecstasy is also a stimulant, allowing the abusers to party longer, but at a

price of depression and heightened anxiety that lasts for days to weeks afterward. Ecstasy use is now known to affect memory and other functions by destroying the nerve fibers linking various regions of the brain.

"Ravers keep the pills mixed in with Tic Tacs or Skittles, and the drug is traded openly at the parties," said Butler. "You don't have to know somebody who knows somebody who will make a discreet sale."

That certainly makes it easier for sellers to ply their wares, but the real attraction, as with any other drug, is profit, and the profits are big. A tablet costing as little as 50 cents to manufacture, can be sold to users in the United States for as much as \$40.

"Plenty of people are going to be attracted by profit margins like that," said Butler. "That means that combating the dealers and networks will remain a high priority for NCIS for the foreseeable future."

For more information on ecstasy, go to the Navy's Alcohol and Drug Abuse Prevention Web site at <http://navdweb.spawar.navy.mil>, or try www.nida.nih.gov/Infofax/ecstasy.html or www.usdoj.gov/dea/concern/mdma/mdmaindex.htm.

***Iwo Jima*, con't. from pg. 3**

Perrino. "But, you also receive more respect from others if you have the ESWS pin."

Legalman 1st Class Marie Hart will leave *Iwo Jima* in December for Officer Candidate School. She found out in March she was selected for the limited duty officer (LDO) program. Hart is not ESWS qualified, but will be before she leaves the ship.

"It would give me great personal satisfaction," said Hart. "Earning my warfare pin will give me a sense of accomplishment."

Hart wants everyone aboard *Iwo Jima* to become qualified. She has coordinated nightly ESWS lectures in her office, featuring department subject-matter experts. The sessions are open to all crewmembers.

Collins, now affectionately referred to simply as "SW" by his co-workers, is not sitting still. His goal is to see every petty officer 3rd class and below in his work center become ESWS qualified.

For information on USS *Iwo Jima*, go to www.spear.navy.mil/ships/lhd7/.

Eruption



A Sailor observes the eruption of Sakurajima volcano from the deck of USS Fort McHenry (LSD 43) before entering port in Kagoshima, Japan. While inport, Fort McHenry hosted a reception aboard the ship with tours for the public, and participated in a community relations project and a sports day with local teams. Photo by Photographer's Mate Airman (AW) Clover B. Christensen

This Week on Navy/Marine Corps News

WASHINGTON (NNS) — Look for the following stories and more on next week's Navy/Marine Corps News show:

- Sailors aboard USS *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) are inspired by the ship's namesake;
- Joint service harbor security exercise Operation *Seahawk* gives Sailors and Marines valuable experience;
- You might want to make New Orleans your next duty station;
- Survivors of USS *Indianapolis* (CA 35) attend their annual reunion in the namesake city.

Compiled on tape #2001-37, the show is on its way to the fleet now.

This Week in Naval History:

- Sept. 10, 1813: During the Battle of Lake Erie, Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, flying his "Don't give up the ship" flag, defeats a British squadron and says: "We have met the enemy and they are ours."
- Sept. 11, 1941: President Franklin D. Roosevelt orders the Navy to "shoot on sight" vessels threatening U.S. shipping or ships under U.S. escort. Roosevelt issued the order following the unsuccessful attack on USS *Greer* (DD 145) by a German submarine off the coast of Iceland.
- Sept. 12, 1961: A Navy task force sails to aid the Galveston area after Hurricane Carla hits Texas. The hurricane, with winds in excess of 150 miles per hour, killed more than 40 people and caused more than \$2 billion in damage.
- Sept. 13, 1847: A Marine Corps brigade leads U.S. forces that storm Chapultepec Castle near Mexico City, Mexico, inspiring one line from the Marine hymn. The victory led to the immediate surrender of Mexico City and brought the war to an end.
- Sept. 14, 1861: At Pensacola, Fla., a party of 100 Sailors and Marines from the U.S. screw frigate *Colorado* destroys the Confederate schooner *Judah*.
- Sept. 15, 1950: During the Korean War, U.S. forces, under the command of Vice Adm. Arthur Struble, achieve an amphibious landing at Inchon, Korea. Conceived by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur, commander in chief of the United Nations Command, the landing cuts the North Korean army supply lines and allows the Marines to retake Seoul, the capital city of South Korea.
- Sept. 16, 1917: Gunner's Mate 1st Class Osmond K. Ingram becomes the first Sailor killed in action during World War I. He was serving aboard USS *Cassin* (DD 43) when he was blown overboard by a German torpedo while attempting to roll a depth-charge over the side. Ingram, who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, became the first enlisted man to have a ship named after him.

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